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Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
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联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

**Talking points for Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General
of UNESCO
on the occasion of the closing of the 2008 Water Science
Forum “Cutting- Edge Technology for Water Services:
Application in Africa”**

U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C,

Washington, 27 June 2008

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- Let me begin by again thanking all those who have worked so hard to put together such an important event, and Dr Hirsch for his keynote speech. It has been a real pleasure to participate in today's activities and spend time with all of you.
- I have been very impressed by the scientific knowledge on display and I appreciated hearing the many new ideas for cooperation between the US and UNESCO in Africa that have emerged from the day's discussions. I look forward to us transforming these ideas into action in the upcoming months.
- Allow me to make some general comments on today's debates:
 - Many of you have emphasized that an inclusive, comprehensive approach is necessary for sustainable water resources management – and that solutions must

be tailored to particular settings, guided by policy relevant research, and aimed at real-world applicability. I fully agree. Adaptability to global changes caused by multiple drivers and to the specific risks and opportunities posed by climate change must also be stressed. The sound management of internationally shared waters is likewise one of the challenges to be addressed.

- I am very gratified at the extraordinary emphasis that this meeting has given to capacity building. In Africa, as well as in other regions of the world, capacity building at the human and institutional levels is of paramount importance and UNESCO is fully committed to this effort. While technology transfer is part of this process, we'll be also looking forward to the development of effective, low cost applicable technology as advocated here.
- The recognition that the meeting has given to developing ownership on the part of beneficiaries of programmes, projects and even standards is to be praised – this is a way to ensuring sustainability.
- I share your special concern for water and semi-arid lands, in particular in developing countries. Dr Hirsch underscored that groundwater must be dealt with in an integrated way with surface water. The role of groundwater as a key and an integral part of the water resources system needs to be more clearly recognized.

- I agree that drinking water and sanitation are key topics that must be addressed within a holistic framework of water resources management. I find the focus on the recovery and reuse of water to augment water availability and reliability, while guaranteeing the appropriate quality, very appropriate.
- While it is true that rural problems outstrip urban ones in Africa as concerns water supply and sanitation, we should not lose sight that urbanization is growing at an astounding rate in the developing world, including Africa, and that cities will need to be prepared - this may require a paradigm shift with respect to how urban problems are handled in other parts of the world.
- I find that the approaches to freshwater issues outlined here dovetail very well with the work that UNESCO is undertaking. Collaboration between the US and UNESCO can only reinforce and multiply the value and effectiveness of our respective efforts. It is important that the points I have highlighted here are translated into concrete action.
- An outstanding example of this cooperation is the forthcoming major International conference on Water Scarcity, Global Changes and Groundwater Management Responses to be held 1-5 December 2008 at the University of California, Irvine, that embodies many of the concepts discussed here today, convenes by UNESCO, the University of California and USGS. I hope that many of you will be present there.

- This Forum clearly illustrates how UNESCO and the scientific community in the United States can collaborate for the benefit of the developing world, and in particular Africa, combining scientific excellence and networks.
- Thank you very much